

## Community resources

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*courage is contagious*

## Viewing cable 09DAMASCUS477, MURKY ALLIANCES: MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD, THE MOVEMENT

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09DAMASCUS477**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09DAMASCUS477	2009-07-08 13:03	2011-08-30 01:44	SECRET//NOFORN	Embassy Damascus

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/10402>  
<http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/10403>  
<http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/10404>  
<http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/10405>  
<http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/10406>  
<http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/11322>  
<http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/11323>  
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<http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/11348>  
<http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/11349>

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DE RUEHDM #0477/01 1891303

ZNY SSSSS ZZH

O 081303Z JUL 09

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6579

INFO RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 0180

RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY 0314

RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0626

RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0593

RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 0697

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0665

RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC PRIORITY

S E C R E T DAMASCUS 000477

NOFORN

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ELA, NEA/PI, DRL/NECSA BARGHOUT

NSC FOR MCDERMOTT/SHAPIRO

LONDON FOR TSOU, PARIS FOR MILLER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/08/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: MURKY ALLIANCES: MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD, THE MOVEMENT  
FOR JUSTICE AND DEMOCRACY, AND THE DAMASCUS DECLARATION

REF: A. 07 DAMASCUS 01156

[1](#)B. DAMASCUS 00185

Classified By: CDA Raymond Maxwell for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: The Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in Syria  
Website published a "letter" on June 11 accusing external  
Damascus Declaration committees of violating the Damascus  
Declaration National Council's bylaws on electing members to  
the General Secretariat. XXXXXXXXXXXX explained  
the Muslim Brotherhood's protest stemmed from the external  
Damascus Declaration committees' failure to coordinate with  
the MB in setting up the external political structures meant  
to compliment the Damascus Declaration's internal structures.  
The rancor expressed in the MB's letter suggested a growing  
fissure between expatriate Damascus Declaration  
representatives, especially between the MB and the small, but  
politically connected and increasingly active Movement for  
Justice and Development (MJD). More worrisome, however, is  
recent information suggesting the SARG may already have  
penetrated the MJD and learned about sensitive USG programs  
in Syria. End Summary.

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Background

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[1](#)2. (C) Since 2005, internal squabbles among political  
parties signatory to the Damascus Declaration have stalled,  
but never obstructed, the organization's forward progress.  
Disputes ranged from how vocal the organization should be in  
condemning U.S. policies in the region (ref A) to whether the  
Damascus Declaration should distance itself from the MB.  
Nasserists and nationalists of varying stripes, especially  
those in the Arab Socialist Democratic Party, whose  
participation in the Damascus Declaration was permitted by  
the SARG as a wedge to create division among reformist ranks,  
proved especially adamant in their rejection of the MB. The  
Nasserists, XXXXXXXXXXXX told us, insisted the MB's involvement  
provoked the SARG; for the Damascus Declaration to continue  
safely, MB participation would have to be jettisoned.

[1](#)3. (C) XXXXXXXXXXXX

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MJD vs. Muslim Brotherhood  
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14. (C) Since 2008, expatriates have formed Damascus Declaration committees throughout Europe and the United States. Initially, XXXXXXXXXXXX remarked, little coordination existed among the nascent "external committees" in the U.S., Britain, Belgium, France, and Germany. The MB, despite having a developed network in Europe and being signatory to the original Declaration, was left on the margin. The MB did not comment on the formation of the committees, nor was the MB's input sought by those putting the committees together, XXXXXXXXXXXX said. XXXXXXXXXXXX added that the purpose of these committees was to put in place a temporary, seven person panel that could elect a small number of external representatives to the General Secretariat, an idea consistent with the founders intentions for the General Secretariat's structure.

15. (C) XXXXXXXXXXXX asked the representative of the London-based Damascus Declaration committee, Anas al-Abdah -- who was also the leader of the Movement for Justice and Development, a self-professed moderate Islamic organization (ref B) -- to contact the MB and invite them to participate in the formation and elections of the ad hoc political panel.

16. (C) "After a year," XXXXXXXXXXXX lamented, "nothing has been achieved. Abdah claimed he tried to contact them, but this is hard to prove." XXXXXXXXXXXX added that other external Damascus Declaration committee members had reported back that they too had attempted to contact the MB without success. XXXXXXXXXXXX told us XXXXXXXXXXXX doubted attempts at contact commenced until it was effectively beside the point -- that is, after the MB broke with the NSF and disavowed opposition activities in response to the Israeli attacks on Gaza. By then, XXXXXXXXXXXX said, it was too late; the MB felt slighted by the external committees. When the MB broke from the NSF, XXXXXXXXXXXX said, "I tried to push XXXXXXXXXXXX to contact them directly," to ask them to participate in the formation of the external political structure. "I said directly, not through (Anas) Abdah because I know competition among groups outside causes problems," XXXXXXXXXXXX recounted. XXXXXXXXXXXX

17. (C) According to XXXXXXXXXXXX, it was the external committees' disregard for MB participation that prompted the Brotherhood to draft and publish its incendiary letter. XXXXXXXXXXXX said "some people are now saying the MB isn't serious about joining in the Damascus Declaration's work" and that the letter is just an excuse -- they have already renounced opposition activities and do not plan to resume them against Syria. XXXXXXXXXXXX cautioned, "I think this comes from outside, not in Syria," and that it is not true. XXXXXXXXXXXX, "The MB is the largest Islamic group in the country; the MJD is just a few people."

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MJD: A Leaky Boat?  
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18. (C) XXXXXXXXXXXX had told us in the past (ref B) that the MJD (1) had many members who were formerly with the MB; (2) was at odds with the MB and sought to marginalize it abroad; (3) was seeking to expand its base in Syria, though it had not been successful; and (4) had been initially lax in its security, often speaking about highly sensitive material on open lines. The first three points speak directly to the ongoing feud and the MB's recent letter of protest. XXXXXXXXXXXX

19. (S/NF) XXXXXXXXXXXX told us security services had asked whether XXXXXXXXXXXX had met with anyone from our "Foreign Ministry" and with anyone from the Democracy Council (Comment: State Department Foreign Affairs Officer Joseph Barghout had recently been in Syria XXXXXXXXXXXX; we assume the SARG was fishing for information, knowing Barghout had entered the country. Jim Prince was in Damascus on February 25, XXXXXXXXXXXX

110. (S/NF) Comment: Born not as a political party, but as an umbrella organization composed of many different groups, the Damascus Declaration has been handicapped by internal divisions among unlikely allies: the Kurds, the MB, liberals, national socialists, communists and others. XXXXXXXXXXXX MJD's organizational successes so far might best be explained as the by-products of its relationship with the XXXXXXXXXXXX and the USG. Evidence the organization has a sizable, influential constituency inside and outside Syria is difficult to

discern. Post has seen no reporting on the size MJD's base in Europe and the U.S. XXXXXXXXXXXX; therefore it would not surprise us if an external committee member like Anas Abdah, who heads both the Damascus Declaration's external London committee and the MJD, would drag his feet when asked to contact the MB.

¶11. (S/NF) Comment continued: XXXXXXXXXXXX report begs the question of how much and for how long the SARG has known about Democracy Council operations in Syria and, by extension, the MJD's participation. Reporting in other channels suggest the Syrian Muhabarat may already have penetrated the MJD and is using MJD contacts to track U.S. democracy programming. If the SARG does know, but has chosen not to intervene openly, it raises the possibility that the SARG may be mounting a campaign to entrap democracy activists receiving illegal (under Syrian law) foreign assistance. End Comment.

MAXWELL